

# Rights of Neutrals Sacred, Declares Note to Allies

Britain in the Boer war. Both Japan and Russia received the principles in their recent war. Even the commander of the Prinz Eitel Friedrich delivered the mails seized from the French steamer Florida as soon as he was able to do so.

Secretary Lansing adds that the United States "expects the present practice of the British and French authorities to cease."

**Prompt Reply Expected.**  
Government officials described the tone of the note as "such as to compel the French and British governments, impressed by the earnestness and evident impatience of the United States in their methods, will not only send a prompt reply, but will make substantial concessions to the American views."

If compliance is not given this government will be placed in a new position as regards the Allies. Previous notes have had no such effect of finality, and it is admitted that a flat rejection of the demands would call for action.

The Bryan treaty, however, providing for a year of examination of disputes before any summary action is taken, makes it improbable that the United States will resort to any force of coercion other than moral.

The friendship of the Allies to preserve the popular favor which their cause enjoys in this country is relied on to prompt a favorable reply.

## Norwegian Ships to Yield Mail Without Seizure

Christiania, May 26.—The Norwegian-American Line has decided to have all its steamships which sail between America and Norway enter Kirkwall voluntarily for inspection of their mails, in order to avoid complications arising from attempts to evade the British authorities by taking the more northerly course.

Stockholm, May 26.—There is much speculation here as to the effect agreements entered into by Danish and Norwegian steamship lines with the British government, whereby they agree voluntarily to permit their steamers to visit Kirkwall and submit to search without the formality of seizure at sea, will have upon American negotiations with England regarding interference with mail.

It is felt that it may complicate matters if England chooses to take advantage of this technical point.

In the meantime the three Scandinavian countries are acting in concert to bring pressure to bear on England to permit first-class mail to come by the ordinary route.

Stockholm has been without American mail for many days.

## U. S. TRADE HURT BY SWEDISH LAW

**War Act, Aimed at Britain, May Cost American Merchants Dearly.**  
Stockholm, May 26.—Officials of the Swedish government are struggling with the task of interpreting a new law known as the "war trade act," which, representatives of American firms say, is seriously handicapping them and may shut off a large part of the trade of America with Sweden.

The law specifically prohibits any one in Sweden making agreements with foreign governments covering disposition of imported goods after reaching Sweden, especially with reference to products manufactured from imported raw materials. It provides that all such agreements must be made through the government trade commission.

# TEXT OF AMERICAN NOTE TO BRITAIN AND FRANCE

## United States Can No Longer Tolerate Wrongs to American Citizens by Illegal Interference with Mails, Says State Department.

Washington, May 26.—The full text of the American communication to Great Britain and France regarding interference with neutral mails, which was delivered by the State Department to the British and French ambassadors Wednesday, follows:

Your excellency: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your excellency's note of April 3 last transmitting a memorandum dated February 15, 1916, and communicated in substance to the American Ambassador in London on February 28, in which are stated the contentions of the British and French governments in regard to the right to detain and examine parcels and letters mailed on route by sea between the United States and Europe.

After a discussion of the use of the mails for the transmission of parcels and of the limitations to be placed on "invisible mail" the joint memorandum of February 15 closes with the following assertions:

"1. That from the standpoint of their right of visitation and eventual arrest and seizure, merchandise shipped in post parcels needs not and shall not be treated otherwise than merchandise shipped in any other manner."

"2. That the inalienability of postal correspondence, stipulated by the eleventh convention of The Hague of 1907 does not in any way affect the right of the Allied governments to visit and, if occasion arise, arrest and seize merchandise hidden in the wrappers, envelopes or letters contained in the mail bags."

**Refrains on High Seas.**  
"3. That, true to their engagements and respect of genuine correspondence, the Allied governments will continue for the present to refrain on the high seas from seizing and confiscating such correspondence, letters or dispatches and will insure their speediest possible transmission as soon as the sincerity of their character shall have been ascertained."

In reply the government of the United States desires to state that it does not consider that the Postal Union Convention of 1906 necessarily applies to the interference by the British and French governments with the overseas transportation of mails of which the government of the United States complains. Furthermore, the Allied powers appear to have overlooked the admission of the government of the United States that post parcels may be treated as merchandise subject to the exercise of belligerent rights as recognized by international law.

But the government of the United States does not admit that such parcels are subject to the "exercise of the rights of police supervision, visitation and eventual seizure which belongs to belligerent powers as to all cargoes on the high seas," as asserted in the joint note under acknowledgment.

It is noted with satisfaction that the British and French governments do not claim, and in the opinion of this government properly do not claim, that their so-called "blockade" measures are sufficient grounds upon which to base a right to interfere with all classes of mail matter in transit to or from the Central Powers. On the contrary, their contention appears to be that, as "genuine correspondence" is "inalienable," "invisible" classes are subject to detention and examination.

**Agree As to Principle.**  
While the government of the United States agrees that "genuine correspondence" is inalienable, it does not admit that belligerents may search other private sea-borne mails for any other purpose than to discover if they contain articles of contraband transmitted under sealed cover as letter mail, though they may intercept at sea all mails coming out of or going into ports of the enemy's coasts, which are effectively blockaded. The governments of the United States, Great Britain and France, however, appear to be in substantial agreement as to principle in the chief cause of difference.

Though giving assurances that they consider "genuine correspondence" to be "inalienable," and that they will, "true to their engagements," refrain "on the high seas" from seizing and confiscating such correspondence, the Allied governments proceed to treat the assurances as the basis of the benefits of such assurances by seizing and confiscating mail from vessels in port instead of at sea.

They compel neutral ships without just cause to open their own ports or to induce shipping lines, through some form of duress, to send their mail ships via British ports, or they detain all vessels merely calling at British ports, thus acquiring by force or unjustifiable means an illegal jurisdiction.

**Mail Taken to London.**  
Acting upon this enforced jurisdiction, the authorities remove all mail, genuine correspondence as well as post parcels, taken them to London, where every piece, even though of neutral origin and destination, is opened and examined to determine the "sincerity of their character," in accordance with the interpretation given that undefined phrase by the British and French censors. Finally the expurgated remainder is forwarded, frequently after irreparable delay, to its destination.

Ships are detained en route to or from the United States or to or from other neutral countries, and mails are held and delayed for several days and in some cases for weeks and even months, even though not routed to ports of North Europe via British ports.

This has been the procedure which has been practiced since the announcement of February 18, 1916. To some extent the same practice followed before that date, calling forth the protest of this government on January 4, 1916. But to that protest the memorandum under acknowledgment makes no reference and is entirely unresponsive.

The government of the United States must again insist with emphasis that the British and French governments do not obtain rightful jurisdiction of ships by forcing or inducing them to visit their ports for the purpose of seizing their mails, or thereby obtain greater belligerent rights as to such ships than they could exercise on the high seas, far beyond in the opinion of the government of the United States, no legal distinction between the seizure of mails at sea, which is announced as abandoned, and their seizure from vessels voluntarily or involuntarily in port.

**Unwarranted Practice.**  
The British and French practice amounts to an unwarrantable limitation on the use by neutrals of the world's highway for the transmission of correspondence. The practice actually forced upon the Allied powers, but he said to justify the conclusion, therefore, that the announcement of February 15 was merely notice that one illegal practice had been abandoned to make room for the development of another more onerous and vexatious in character.

The present practice is a violation not only of the spirit of the announcement of February 15, but of the rule of the Hague Convention upon which it is concededly based. Aside from this, it is a violation of the prior practice of nations which Great Britain and the allies have in the past assisted to establish and maintain, notwithstanding the statement in the memorandum "that as late as 1907 the letters and dispatches themselves could be seized and confiscated."

During the war between the United States and Mexico the United States forces allowed British steamers to enter and depart from the port of Vera Cruz without molesting the mails intended for inland points.

During the American Civil War Lord Russell endeavored to induce the United States to concede that "the mails of the United States should be exempted from visitation or detention." This exemption of mails was urged in October, 1862, in the name of the United States at the Adels. On October 31 Secretary Seward announced that "public mails of any friendly or neutral power duly certified or authenticated as such shall not be subject to visitation or detention, but as speedily as may be convenient on the way to their designated destination."

**U. S. Did Not Open Mails.**  
In accordance with this announcement, the government of the United States did not open the mails of the ship Peterhoff, which had been seized by her mails against the protest of her majesty's government, had her mails forwarded to destination unopened.

The same rule was followed by France, as I am advised, in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870; by the United States in the Spanish-American War of 1898; by Great Britain in the South African War, in the case of the German mail steamer Bundesrath and General; by Japan and substantially by Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904.

And even in the present war, as the memorandum of Great Britain and France states, their enemy, Germany, has desisted from the practice of interfering with neutral mails, even on board belligerent steamers.

This is illustrated by the case of the French steamer Florida, captured by the auxiliary cruiser Prinz Eitel Friedrich, cited by the British and French governments in support of their argument regarding the seizure of mails. In this case the letter mails of the Florida, amounting to 144 sacks, were forwarded to their destination by the commander at the first opportunity upon arriving in the United States. It would seem, therefore, to be conclusively established that the interference with mails of which this government justly complains are wrong in principle and in practice.

The arbitrary methods employed by the British and French governments have resulted most disastrously to citizens of the United States. Innumerable papers which can never be duplicated, or can be duplicated only with great difficulty, such as United States patents for inventions, rare documents, legal papers relating to the settlement of estates, powers of attorney, life insurance claims, income tax returns and similar matters have been lost.

Delays in receiving shipping documents have caused great loss and inconvenience by preventing prompt delivery of goods. In the case of the MacNiff Horticultural Company of New York, large shipments of plants and bulbs from Holland were, it is reported, frozen on the wharves because possession could not be obtained in the absence of documents relating to them which had been taken from the Rotterdam office of the Oosterdijk and the Rotterdam.

Business opportunities are lost by failure to transmit promptly bids, specifications and contracts. The Undergrowth Cable Company, of Pittsburgh, for example, sent by mail a tender and specifications for certain proposed electrical works to be completed in Christiania. After several weeks of waiting, the papers have failed to arrive. The American company was told that the bids could not be lost, but the tender and specifications were awarded to a British competitor.

**Money Orders Lost.**  
Checks, drafts, money orders, securities and similar property are lost or detained for weeks and months. Business correspondence relating to legitimate and bona fide trade between neutral countries, correspondence of a personal nature, and also certain official correspondence, such as consular lists and other matter forwarded by government departments, are detained, lost, or possibly destroyed.

For instance, the Postmaster General informs that certain international money order lists from the German Empire to Germany, Greece and other countries, and from Germany to the United States, sent through the mails, have not reached their destination, though dispatched several months ago. It was necessary to have some of these lists duplicated and again dispatched by the steamship Frederick VII, which sailed from New York on April 19, and from which all the mails intended for Germany have been taken and held in British jurisdiction.

As a further example of the delay and loss consequent upon the British practice, the Postmaster General also sends me a copy of a letter from the British postal administration admitting that the mails were removed from the steamer Medan in the Downs on January 30 last, and not forwarded until some time "between the 2d of February and the 2d of March," and that the bags of these mails "were lost during transmission to Holland on the 26th day of February by the Dutch steamer Mecklenburg. The Medan arrived safely at Rotterdam a day or two after she left the Downs."

**Sufficient Facts Cited.**  
Numerous complaints similar to the foregoing have been received by this government, the details of which are available, but I believe I have cited sufficient facts to show the unprecedented and vexatious nature of the interference with mails persisted in by British and French authorities.

Not only are American commercial interests injured, but rights of property are violated and the rules of international law and custom are palpably disregarded. I can only add that this continuing offense had led to such losses to American citizens and to a possible injury to the United States that I feel it my duty to demand that this government will be compelled in the near future to press claims for full reclamation upon the attention of this majestic government and that of the French Republic.

The principle being plain and definite, and the present practice of the governments of Great Britain and France being clearly in contravention of the principle, I will state more in detail the position of the government of the United States in regard to the treatment of certain classes of sea-borne mail under a strict application of the principle upon which our governments seem to be in general accord.

The government of the United States is inclined to the opinion that the class of mail matter which includes stocks, bonds, coupons and similar securities is to be regarded as of the same nature as merchandise or other articles of property and subject to the same exercise of belligerent rights. The stocks, bonds, drafts, notes and other negotiable instruments which may pass as the equivalent of money, are, it is considered, also to be classed as merchandise.

**Should Be Unmolested.**  
Correspondence, including shipping documents, money order lists and papers of that character, even though relating to "enemy supplies or exports," unless carried on the same ship as the property referred to, is in the opinion of this government, to be regarded as "genuine correspondence" and entitled to unmolested passage.

The government of the United States, in view of the improper methods employed by the British and French authorities in interrupting mails passing between the United States and other neutral countries, and in view of the United States and its enemies of Great Britain, can no longer tolerate the wrongs which citizens of the United States have suffered and continue to suffer through these methods.

To restrict to a lawful practice of this character would open the door to repeated violations of international law by the belligerent powers on the ground of military necessity of which the violator would be the sole judge. Manifestly a neutral nation cannot permit its rights on the high seas to be determined by belligerents or the exercise of those rights to be permitted or denied arbitrarily by the government of a warring nation. The rights of neutrals are as sacred as the rights of belligerents and must be as strictly observed.

## IRISH TALK BEGIN BY OWN SKODAS

**He Confers with Redmond and Carson in Effort to Weld Factions.**  
Dublin, May 26.—David Lloyd George already has entered upon the preliminaries of the task of conciliation of the Irish factions. He had conversations to-day with John Redmond, leader of the Irish Nationalists, and Sir Edward Carson, the Ulster leader, and has planned a course of action which will involve visits to various parts of Ireland and interviews with men of the most divergent opinions.

## FEW TROOPS TO COPE WITH REBELS AT FIRST

Only 2,555 British Soldiers in Ireland When Sinn Feiners Revolted.

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The fact that Parliament will adjourn next Thursday for three weeks is considered fortunate for his task, as this will make it impossible for any discussion of it to take place while the negotiations are proceeding.

John O'Connor, a prominent Nationalist member of Parliament, in which he has represented North Kildare for many years, declared a statement issued to-day following a visit he had paid to a prison where a large number of Irish citizens accused of participation in the recent rebellion have been detained since their arrival in England that there was not a shadow of foundation for the allegations of their ill-treatment by the military.

Dublin, May 26.—On Easter Monday, the day on which the Irish rebellion began, the number of available British troops in Ireland was only 2,555. This fact was given by Major General Cowell, who testified to-day before the Royal Commission which is investigating the uprising.

General Friend, who was in command of the British forces in Ireland at the time, admitted that the number of troops was small, and said that until April 1 he had been responsible for this state of affairs, having taken the view of the British government that the rebellion was a local affair, and that it would be sufficient to send reinforcements to the north.

Major General Cowell said that if the outbreak had not occurred military action certainly would have been taken within a very brief period.

## AMERICAN AIRMEN DEFEAT FOKKERS

Continued from page 1  
but un wounded. His machine was hit by an explosive bullet as he chased two Aviatiks. He is proposed for citation in the army orders. For his part in the battle Bert Hall has been proposed for promotion to adjutant and for the military medal. To replace the two wounded men Glyde Balsley and C. C. Johnson have been ordered to join the escadrille. Dudley L. Hill and Lawrence Kungse, who were awaiting orders to join the escadrille, have been ordered to join the escadrille. Fred Prince and Willis Haviland, of Chicago, and Robert Rockwell, of Cincinnati, have been breveted.

Lieutenant Thaw arrived in Paris to-day. He was able to be about and his condition is considered quite satisfactory. He is being treated at the home of his sister, Mrs. Lawrence Slade.

## BRITISH TONNAGE MORE DESPITE U-BOAT WAR

Merchant Vessels, However, Decreased in 1915 by 262.  
London, May 26.—According to Lloyd's Register of Shipping, the total addition to the register of the United Kingdom during 1915 was 655 steamships of 1,461,815 tons, and 152 sailing vessels of 61,934 tonnage. Removals from the register during the year were 741 steamers of 1,452,470 tonnage and 334 sailing vessels of 82,222 tonnage, so that during the year steamers on the register decreased by 86, while the number of sailing vessels decreased by 182 and the tonnage by 20,286. The total number of vessels on the register on December 31 last was approximately 12,778 steamers of 19,154,271 tonnage and 6,021 sailing vessels of 844,321 tonnage.

During the year 377 new steamers were built, 77 bought from foreign countries, 14 transferred from colonies and 192 acquired under the heading of "other additions," which includes enemy vessels requisitioned.

Removals of steamers from the register are classified as 592 lost or broken up, 71 sold foreign, 122 transferred to colonies, 59 "other deductions." Vessels sold foreign included 17 steamers, 78,478 tons, and six sailing vessels, 9,870 tons, sold to the United States.

## AUSTRIANS SLAIN BY OWN SKODAS

**Big Guns Dig Men's Graves Among Heights of Trentino.**  
Rome, May 26 (via London).—The Austrian offensive has made no progress for the last three days. It appears to have been arrested except on the southern front, around Rovereto. On the other hand, the Italian counter-offensive has become intensified, with the result that several positions which were previously evacuated have been reoccupied.

## VILLAGES RAZED IN ADIGE VALLEY

Teutons' Action Delayed by Flood of Wounded Transported from Front.

[By Cable to The Tribune.]  
Rome, May 26 (via London).—The Austrian offensive has made no progress for the last three days. It appears to have been arrested except on the southern front, around Rovereto. On the other hand, the Italian counter-offensive has become intensified, with the result that several positions which were previously evacuated have been reoccupied.

Some positions on Monte Maggio were lost and retaken four times, but eventually had to be abandoned. The Austrians are not in occupation of these positions, which are being bombarded day and night by Italian artillery in the rear. Slight resistance has been offered by the enemy's infantry. The men have to be forced forward to slaughter by the fire of their own artillery, which has killed more Austrians than Italians.

The confidence of Italy in a definite victory is growing, and hope is beginning seriously to be entertained that Trentino will be the grave of the Austrian army.

Rome, May 26.—Reports from the Trentino front say that the Alpine troops and Bersaglieri are decimating the Austrian infantry whenever they try to attack outside the range of their guns. The Austrian losses are heavy. It is declared that they are causing delay in the Austrian action. Communication with the interior of Austria is blocked by the transport of wounded from the front.

The Austrian troops engaged in the battle are chiefly composed of Tyrolese, Hungarians and Bohemians, these nationalities being considered best adapted for the mountain warfare. The greatest advantage over the Italians continues to be their abundant supply of food and clothing.

Major General Cowell said that if the outbreak had not occurred military action certainly would have been taken within a very brief period.

## For Your Family's Sake

**Realize What the Church Means to You and Work for It.**  
Years ago when the Pilgrims landed they brought with them from the old world two precious legacies—their religion and the love of their homes. Life with them having more of hardships than of pleasures, they understood the close link that bound their Church to their homes. They went to Church and took their families.

To-day our lives contain more of pleasures than of hardships and thousands of our families have grown far away from this great Church influence. Some member of each family may go to Church—but we do not go as a family.

Home means as much to us as it did to the Pilgrims in their day. Our home life is the steady influence throughout the entire country.

But what we do not appreciate as did they is the fact that the Church and the home are fighting a common cause; that they are founded upon the same principles—morality, brotherly love and Christian living; that the Church and the home are dependent upon each other for their very existence.

For this reason if for no other you should support the Church—for the sake of your home.

But remember, besides this, that each member of your family needs the Church individually.

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## J.M. Gidding & Co.

564-566 and 568 Fifth Avenue, 46th and 47th Sts.  
Will close out—for today only  
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## Tailor-made Suits

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Smart models—fashioned according to usual Gidding requirements—of fine high-grade fabrics—beautifully tailored and handsomely lined—a splendid assortment of high-class styles; the remainder of various lines.

**SMART HATS**—Formerly to \$25—\$10  
**SPECIAL GROUPS OF HATS**—to close at.....\$5

of artillery, the firing of which in the midst of the colossal Alpine barriers produces an effect similar to an earthquake.  
Eighteen persons were killed and a score of others injured in an air raid to-day on Bari, on the Italian Adriatic coast. The victims were largely women and children.

## BULGARS RUSHED TO SALONICA FRONT

Important Allied Activities Expected by Teutons.  
Paris, May 26.—A Havas dispatch from Athens says it has been learned from a reliable source that 30,000 Bulgarians have been brought from the Black Sea coast to reinforce the Macedonian front.

Athens, May 26.—Exceptional military activity at Salonica is believed here to portend developments of great importance. General Howell, chief of the British staff, and other officers of the Allies who have been on leave in Athens have been recalled suddenly.

Plattsburg Men to Get Pay.  
Employees of the Southwestern Telegraph and Telephone Company have received notice that if they are members of the National Guard or Naval Militia they are to receive full pay if they spend the required time at a preparedness camp this summer, and, in addition, will receive vacations to which they are entitled under the general rules of the company. It is generally thought that this sort of cooperation with the government will greatly increase the efficiency of the summer camps, especially in telephone field work.

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